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HOUSEKEEPER'S CHAT

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION

U. S. Department of Agriculture

Subject: "Ironing Day Conveniences". Suggestions from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin Available: "Methods and Equipment for Home Laundering".

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I notice, in a great many of the new houses I've seen, that a built-in ironing board is one of the regular features of attraction for the housewife. Perhaps I should say that I've been helping a friend of mine to find a new home. I've enjoyed going about with her because of the many good ideas I pick up for my radio friends, as well as for myself.

Take the built-in ironing boards. They are sometimes set in a niche of the wall between two doors- in a space too narrow for any other use. Frequently this space is made into a shallow closet, with a door that can shut the folded-up ironing board out of sight. Beneath the board are shelves for storing the iron, iron rest, wax and other small supplies needed in ironing.

Builders do not always choose the best position for a built-in ironing board, however. This is a point which one can look out for in planning a new home, or in planning to install a board of this kind in any home. It is important to have good light on the board, both from a window during the day, and from a well-placed light fixture. One hopes it will not be necessary to iron at night, but there are always dark days during the winter months.

Another thing: The worker does not want to stand in a direct draft. Ironing is a warm task at best, but good ventilation can be arranged without the discomfort of a draft. If the ironing board has to be in the kitchen, as in many apartments, it is sometimes difficult to place it out of the path other people must take in coming in or out or in doing other work.

Built-in ironing boards generally have a folding support, hinged to the under side. This should be placed toward the middle, so that a skirt or long dress can be slipped over the outer end of the board.

The height of a board that is hinged to the wall should be very carefully determined with respect to the person who is to use it. If it is likely that several people of different size will need to iron



in the household, an adjustable arrangement will be needed. Perhaps an adjustable folding board, that can be put away after ironing, will serve the purpose best in a family of this kind.

Every ironing board should be firmly padded and covered with a clean white cloth. Personally, I like to pad my boards with the double-faced cotton flannel that I also use for a silence cloth on the dining-room table. An old blanket is good, too, I like to use enough thicknesses of padding to give the surface spring without making it cushiony. I tack the padding snugly to the under side of the board, but I tie the outer cover on with tapes or lacers. Ready-made covers can be bought that lace together through eyelets. Old sheets may be used for the cover, but new unbleached sheeting muslin is better. It is not expensive.

I keep a small sheet of asbestos under the iron rest, and nearby, a piece of newspaper or old cloth to try the iron on to make sure it won't scorch my cover. Some boards have a piece of tin or other sheet metal about 8 inches wide tacked across the end on which the iron is to stand.

There are a good many suggestions on the subject of ironing/<sup>in</sup> the free bulletin, "Methods and Equipment for Home Laundering". If you haven't seen this bulletin, I hope that you will send for it at once.

It will tell you how to select and care for an electric iron, or what points to look for if you prefer an ironing machine, or what weight to choose if you use "sadirons", or gas, gasoline, or charcoal irons. I was glad to find out from it exactly how to fold towels and men's shirts, and many other articles. If you have a good place for a built-in ironing-board, you can get from the bulletin detailed directions for making one. Drawings and measurements are given to guide the handy-man-about-the-house who will most likely be called on to make it.

The care of an electric iron is discussed at some length. The under side must be kept smooth, of course, so the iron must be put away in a dry place every time it is used. If left for a long time, it should be greased with lard to prevent rust. For starched work, waxing the bottom of the iron slightly while ironing with it, is a help. Never detach an electric iron by pulling at the cord. Take firm hold of the plug where it enters the socket in the wall.

I must hurry over my talk about ironing, or we won't have time for a menu and the two recipes I want to give you.

But I do want to mention as additional ironing equipment, a sleeve board with a narrow enough end to do baby's and childrens's dresses if necessary; a high stool to sit on while ironing; a clothes rack to air and dry clothes with the least possible folding; hangers for dresses and blouses, and near-by hooks to hang them on; a moist cloth for taking the shine off seams and thick places in starched articles.



Do you sort your ironed articles as you finish them? I do. Especially I take out garments with buttons off, and other things that need mending. Then I don't have to handle the clothes after they have been folded. And Billy can take his pile and put it right away- a little point, but one that saves me many valuable minutes.

Now for the promised menu,- a Sunday dinner menu this time. Ready?

Ham Smothered with Sweet Potatoes; Peas; Cold Slaw; and Apricot Tapioca. Shall I read it again? (Repeat.)

The recipe for Ham Smothered with Sweet Potatoes is not in the Radio Cookbook, so I'll broadcast it now. Four ingredients:

#### HAM SMOOTHERED WITH SWEET POTATOES

1 slice ham	2 tablespoons sugar
3 sweet potatoes, sliced	1 cup hot water

Brown the ham lightly on both sides and place in a baking dish. Spread the sliced sweet potatoes over the ham and sprinkle with the sugar. Add the hot water to the drippings, pour over the ham and potatoes, cover, and bake in a moderate oven (350°F.) until the ham is tender. Baste the potatoes occasionally with the gravy, toward the last remove the lid, and let the top brown.

Here's a hint on cooking the peas so they will be tender and keep their natural green color: Simmer them, uncovered, just below the boiling point. Do not add salt until they are about half-done.

I'll read the recipe for Apricot Tapioca now. Five ingredients:

#### APRICOT TAPIOCA

1/2 pound dried apricots	1/4 teaspoon salt
3 cups water	1/2 cup sugar
3 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca	

Wash the apricots and soak them overnight in the water. In the morning cook the apricots until tender and drain. If necessary, add water to the juice to make 2 cups, stir in the tapioca and salt, and cook in a double boiler for 15 minutes, or until the tapioca is clear. Force the apricots through a sieve and add the pulp and the sugar to the tapioca. Chill and serve with plain or whipped cream.

That concludes our program for today.  
Monday: "Food Fallacies and Superstitions."

